

# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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## WORLD COUNCIL LEADER WELCOMED

"The World Council is the servant of churches throughout the world", said Dr. Daisuke Kitagawa at a reception in his honor held this afternoon at the Christian Center in Tokyo. Dr. Kitagawa is Secretary of the World Council's Department of Church and Society, with headquarters in Geneva. During this month he is scheduled to lead conferences in various parts of Japan. (See ACTIVITY NEWS, Number 122, April 15, 1958).

Dr. Kitagawa was welcomed by an enthusiastic group of more than fifty church leaders, and was officially introduced by Dr. Kiyoshi Hirai, General Secretary of the National Christian Council.







The World Council of Churches leader gave a stimulating address in which he outlined the history of the ecumenical movement since the closing decades of the nineteenth century. He traced the emergence of the International Missionary Council, as well as the movements concerned with 'Faith and Order' and 'Life and Work'. He told how ecumenical leaders were able to maintain fellowship between the churches of enemy countries in Europe during the dark years of World War II, although the World Council itself was not officially organized until the Amsterdam Assembly of 1948.

"This Council," Dr. Kitagawa pointed out, "is no mere bureaucratic structure, but the embodiment of a mighty spiritual movement toward Christian unity in the world... It is not dominated by the West, nor should it be thought of as an instrument of the West. It is for the whole world." As he explained the organization and purpose of the World Council, Dr. Kitagawa urged that more should be done to acquaint Christians in the rest of the world with the life and thought of the Japanese Church.

In this country, the Japan Episcopal Church and the United Church of Christ are now full members of the World Council of Churches.

#### REFORMED THEOLOGIANS' CONCLAVE

At least seventeen different denominational bodies were represented at the second Reformed Theological Conference, which was held in Osaka on April 28-29. The gathering, organized by a number of missionaries who are "bound together by a mutual appreciation for the Reformed heritage which stems from John Calvin in particular", had as its theme "Christian Ethics".

Dr. John Wick Bowman, guest professor at International Christian University, gave two lectures based on the text of St. Matthew 5: "The portrait of a Christian", and "Christian Social Ethics". The thought of Calvin and other Protestant reformers regarding "The Liberty of Man" and "Liberty of Conscience" was discussed by Dr. Henry Stob of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dr. Stob is Associate Professor of Ethics and Apologetics at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, currently lecturing at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Kobe.

On the final evening of the conference, Dr. Hidenobu Kuwada, President of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, and Professor of Dogmatic Theology at that institution, was the speaker. Dr. Kuwada told of the history of Christian social witness in the Japanese Church, and of the development--especially in post-war years-- of an adequate theological foundation for social teaching and action.







A very helpful ~~feature of this Conference~~ was its use of The Hymnbook, a hymnal prepared three years ago by five of the major Presbyterian bodies in the United States. The Reverend I. John Hesselink of Fukuoka introduced The Hymnbook in an informative paper entitled "The Significance of the Metrical Psalms in the Hymnody of the Church". Enough copies were available so that everyone was able to use The Hymnbook in worship sessions at the Conference.

Although most of the 57 persons registered at the Conference were missionaries, several Japanese ministers and one Chinese pastor were in attendance. In addition to men and women of the Reformed tradition, several Methodist, Episcopal, and Lutheran clergy took part and made a valuable contribution to the discussion.

The group appreciated the hospitality of the Osaka Christian Center, a modern building operated by Japanese Christian laymen of the Osaka area.

#### COMMISSION TO STUDY CHURCH UNITY

The National Christian Council has organized a study commission on Church Unity. The commission is to begin its work this month with an investigation of the doctrine of the Church according to the various historic traditions of Protestantism. At the May meeting, Dr. Yuzuru Mori, principal of the Theological Seminary of the Japan Episcopal Church will read a paper on the Anglican view of the Church and the Sacraments.

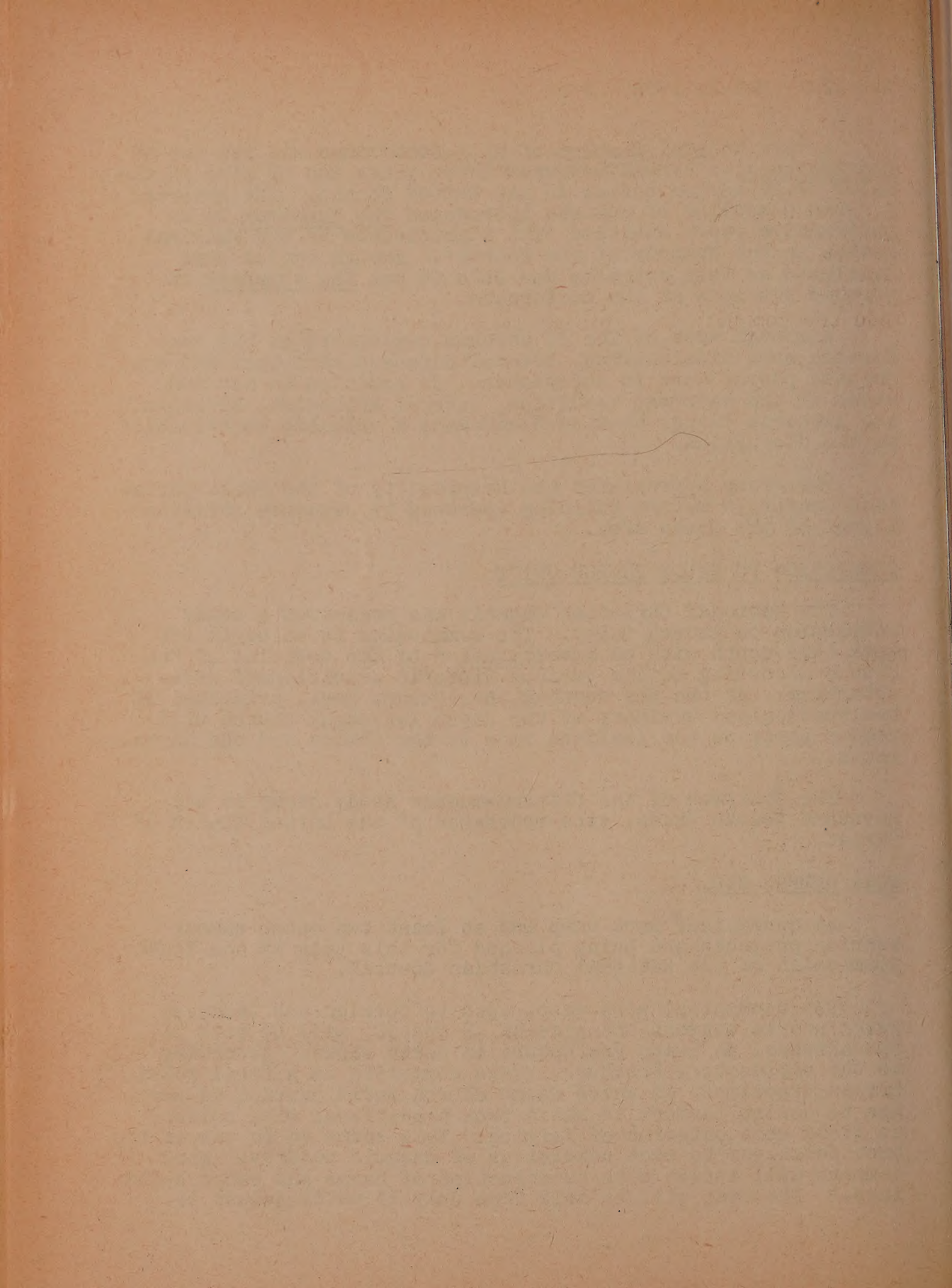
The Chairman of the fifteen-member study group is the Reverend Gosaku Okada, vice-moderator of the United Church of Christ.

#### WORK CAMPS, ETC.

An ecumenical work camp and at least two other summer service projects are being planned for this year by the Youth Commission of the National Christian Council.

The ecumenical work camp, open to foreign and Japanese young people between the ages of 19 and 30, will be held at Okunakayama, in Iwate Prefecture in north Japan. According to the explanatory brochure, "This community is a focal point for an experiment in which Japan Church World Service is working to assist farmers to shift from traditional rice culture to field crop patterns of farming. This seems to be one of the best solutions to meet conditions of endemic poverty. Work campers will assist with construction of barns and other buildings." The camp will be held from July 15 until August 15.







A camp for high school students is planned for the village of Hakkoda-san, in Aomori Prefecture, to run from July 24 - August 7. In this frontier village "repatriates are attempting to develop life anew. Last year work campers helped to bring electric power into the community for the first time. The project this year will be to develop facilities to bring water into the community. Japanese language will be used".

Also for Japanese-speaking young people, a students-in-industry project will be held in Osaka from about July 18 until August 18. "In this project students will hold regular factory jobs...Through discussions with labor, management and community leaders, members will examine the relevance of Christian faith to economic life..."

Inquiries about summer service projects should be sent to Delmar Wedel, National Committee YMCA, 2, 1-chome, Nish Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

#### CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY FOR PEACE

An "International Assembly of Christians concerned for Peace" is being planned for Thursday, August 14, in Tokyo.

A special committee of laymen and clergy headed by Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa hope to include people from the following categories in the one-day conclave:

--World Christian Education Convention delegates from abroad having a special concern for the problems of world peace.

--Christians from overseas coming to Japan this summer to take part in the Fourth International Convention for the Banning of the Hydrogen Bomb.

--Interested leaders from various churches and Christian organizations within Japan.

A preliminary statement issued by Dr. Kagawa's committee suggests the following basis for participation in this gathering: An acknowledgement that Christ is Lord over history and over the entire world, and the belief that it is imperative for Christians to speak and act responsibly as members of Christ's family. The committee made reference to the Evanston Assembly of 1954, and to more recent utterances of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches regarding disarmament and world peace.







The Christian leaders who come together on August 14 will be urged to give attention to the following:

--The dimensions of the historic disaster at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the extent of aid thus far extended to victims of the atomic bomb, and further possibilities for international cooperation in this area.

--A concrete discussion of what Christians of the world can do together to eliminate nuclear weapons testing, to reduce armaments, and to ease international tension.

Other members of the 36-man planning committee include Dr. Michio Kozaki, National Christian Council chairman; Tokutaro Kitamura, a former member of the Diet and one-time minister of finance; Dr. Toyohiko Hori, Tokyo University professor; Dr. Sadao Tanegawa, professor at Waseda University; Miss Gerturude Kuechlich, United Church-related missionary; and the Reverend Kaname Tsukahara of the National Christian Council staff.



